showcase the first couple's Anew TV series might lack of etiquette, P 28



### BIDEN ROOTS FOR FLYERS

if he doesn't, Jill makes The vice president said him sleep alone, P 28

TUESDAY, JUNE 22

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# The House's retiring shoe man did it all

By Jordy Yager

Nearly every day the House has convened during the past trekked to the Capitol from his Maryland home to shine law-speaker's chounge.

But his last day as one of the House's But his last day as one of the House's most beloved figures the 77-year-old decided it had work. With two artificial knees black metal cane to balance out pressure and diabetes — for days a week — Carter decided it had pressure and diabetes — for days a week — Carter decided it had pressure and diabetes — for days a week — Carter decided it Lawmakers, however, did not allow him to leave quietly. On Carter's last day, Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) took to the House floor to officially recognize him. Wilson has never even said, but they share a homein Beech Island, S.C., where born. Every year Wilson brings flag and the South Carolina flag it on the lapel of his suit jacket. At the close of Wilson's speech, as dozens of members rose to ingovation, Carter stood above them in the House gallery, blow-

ing ovation, Carter stood above them in the House gallery, blowing kisses as tears streamed down his cheeks.

"This was the happiest day of my life," Carter said afterward. Carter made a living in the House charging \$6 per shine,

but though he had been working on shoes since he was a teenager in Augusta, Ga., he is also a Methodist minister who at one

time aspired to a singing career.

His time in the House taught him a few things: Republicans are better tippers than Demopolitical parties equally; and pray for their souls.

"When I pray to God for this shoes, I don't separate Democrats from Republicans," Carter said, sitting down in the Speaker's Lobby while on a break feeling old age were absent on hers approached Carter, telling One Republican lawmaker even handed Carter five \$20 bills as a "retirement bonus," Carter handed Carter five \$20 bills as a "retirement bonus," Carter said. He stuck the \$100 in his left pants pocket so as not to mix it up with the change he right pocket.

Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) told him that in Rangel's 40 years on capitol Hill, he's seen a staff member get recognized only once

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before.

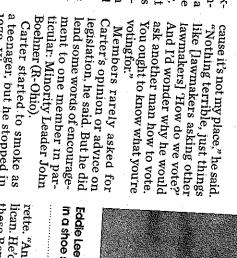
Carter said his perch in the Speaker's Lounge also taught him a lot about how the House operates.

"What you hear on the floor and what you hear in the Speaker's Lounge might be two different things," said Carter, wearing a beige suit jacket; a land black shirt; and a yellow, gray "I've heard conversations that

ard conversations that speak of again, just be-

Boehner (R-Ohio).
Carter started to smoke as a teenager, but he stopped in 1973. His trick was to carry a light it. Outside of his window in the Speaker's Lounge, Carter would see the members of Congress who smoke pacing back and forth on the balcony. Boehner was one of them.
One day while he was getting ashine, I said, 'Mr. Boehner, I'm praying for you [to stop] smok-

praying for you [to stop] sming. He said, 'Mr. Reverend, it's hard,' "Carter re-





Eddie Lee Carter came to Washington as a singer and began working in a shoe shop to raise money. Eventually he opened his own store.

rette. "And he was a big Republican. He'd start espousing all of

these Republican principles to anyone that was ever around. He was a really nice guy who really did a great job for the members, and he's somebody we'll miss."

Carter saw a lot of shoes during his time on Capitol Hill, but he said Rep. Sanford Bishop Jr. (D-Ga.) has some of the best and is one of the sharpest-dressed members. Bishop on ce gave congressmen — like Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) when he was in the House — to their homes nearby on Capitol Hill to pick up large orders of shoes needing fixing. He estimated he's repaired the shoes of about 15 Carter was also known to drive ongressmen — like Sen. Tom Jdall (D-N.M.) when he was

Carter first came to Washington as a singer to make a solo
record. He began working in a
shoe shop to raise money. Eventually he opened up his own
store — the first of three
shoe shops he's owned —
and the dream of becoming a career vocalist faded, though he's sung at
the Kennedy Center and
in dozens of churches
over the years.

Before he left at the
end of his last day,
Carter sat down outside the south entrance
to the House floor and
held his first impromptu
concert in the Capitol to
passers-by. Singing hymns like
'Amazing Grace," the sound
to the Rotunda and mixed, fitthe shoes of staff and lawmakers leaving for the day.

## "WHEN I PRAY TO GOD FOR THIS PLACE, AND WHEN I WORK ON THEIR SHOES, I DON'T SEPARATE DEMOCRATS FROM REPUBLICANS."

Eddie Lee Carter House's retiring shoe man

called. "I
said, 'Try not lighting it.
That's how I stopped.'"
Boehner, for his part, said he
was going to miss Carter, joking
that he was losing a fellow Re-

"He'd preach to you," said Boehner on his way out to the House balcony to smoke a ciga-

Carter a pan of old golf shoes that were peeling apart. Days later Carter returned the shoes to Bishop, but the lawmaker didn't recognize them. Carter had covered them anew white leather. Sanford said

with white leather. Sanford said he golfs in them all the time now.